The NATURE at WORK Framework

Working with Nature to Improve Organisational Performance

The **Nature at Work Framework** is a model and an approach which helps organisations to improve their performance by working more sustainably, in harmony with nature, and drawing on the lessons which nature can teach us. When organisations use the Nature at Work Framework to improve their performance, they also improve their relationship with nature and become more environmentally and socially responsible.

The aim of the Nature at Work Framework is to help any company, business, or organisation to become a **Natural Organisation**. The Natural Organisation is represented visually by a tree where the branches, roots and trunk are all interdependent and interconnected.

A **Natural Organisation** is…

- Purposeful and effective
- Resilient and sustainable
- Happy and harmonious
- Creative and positive

Why use the Nature at Work Framework?

By acknowledging and nurturing our connection with nature and by looking to nature for solutions, inspiration and ideas, we can improve the way organisations work and create real and lasting benefits.

When individual employees are connected with nature, they experience:

- Improved health and wellbeing
- Increased energy, creativity, concentration, and insight
- The ability to reflect and learn
- Improved problem-solving and decision-making abilities
- Greater tolerance and more harmonious relationships
- Greater job satisfaction and loyalty to their employer

This generates improved organisational performance and culture through:

- Better Leadership – visionary, courageous leaders who have a greater purpose
- A more positive and values-led culture
- Increased productivity
- Lower staff turnover and reduced recruitment and training costs
- Better relationships, collaboration and teamwork
- Increased engagement – people give over and above what is required of them
- Greater levels of commitment, trust and loyalty
- Improved external reputation as an employer of choice
- Greater customer satisfaction
- More effective, integrated systems and processes
- More creativity, innovation and better problem-solving

When organisations and their staff are connected with nature and make changes to the way the live and work, they create benefits to the environment and to future generations which include:

- Respect for and understanding of nature
- More ethical and sustainable actions and behaviour
- Improvements to the local community and local environment
- Decision-making based on long-term impact rather than short-term gain
- Increased sustainability and reduced negative impact on the planet

Applying the Nature at Work Framework

Every organisation is different so we begin with a diagnostic process to assess the extent to which it is a **Natural Organisation** and how strong its roots and branches are. We then we work in partnership with the organisation's people to identify what changes and improvements need to be made, develop an action plan to achieve these aims, and facilitate a range of activities which help generate these changes.

The elements which make up the **Nature at Work Framework** are outlined below:

The ROOTS

These are the fundamental principles, beliefs and behaviours that underpin and support a Natural Organisation. They are **Connect**, **Respect**, **Enrich**, and **Learn**.

CONNECT: **The organisation is *connected* to Nature**

- People understand that they and their organisation are part of the interconnected, interdependent web of life.
- People see their organisation as a living system which is part of a greater ecosystem.
- The organisation considers the implications for the planet and for future generations when making decisions.
- People are committed to improving the lives and circumstances of other people, organisations, and the world around them through their own actions.

RESPECT: **The organisation *respects* nature**

- People in the organisation care about the environment and the natural world.
- The organisation encourages activities which support and promote natural life and reduce damage to the planet.
- People are committed to changing their thinking and habits in order to work more sustainably.
- The organisation develops and promotes policies, procedures and practices which reduce damage to the planet and improve the natural environment.

ENRICH: **The organisation is *enriched* by nature**

- People recognise the benefits of nature to physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing.
- The organisation actively encourages people to spend time in or near nature to increase their wellbeing, creativity, and job performance.
- The organisation values working in nature as a valuable and positive business tool for strategic development, planning, relationship building, and problem solving.
- The organisation strives to create a more natural working environment.

LEARN: **The organisation *learns* from Nature**

- People understand the value of nature as a teacher, mentor, and mirror and use it to help them make sense of their organisation and its challenges.
- People look to nature for ideas, inspiration and solutions to problems.
- People use nature as a metaphor to help them understand complex issues and ideas.
- The organisation uses nature to help it find appropriate ways to adapt, develop, thrive and grow.

The BRANCHES

These are the four key elements of an organisation's operations. They are **Natural Leadership**, **Natural Systems**, **Natural People** and **Natural Development**.

NATURAL LEADERSHIP:

🍃 Leaders are self-aware, understand their impact and influence on others, and manage their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual energies to inspire, motivate and engage others.

🍃 Leaders have a strong sense of purpose, are compassionate, visionary, and courageous, and consider the moral and ethical consequences of their actions and decisions.

🍃 Leaders create a culture in which people are valued and trusted and given space to breathe and grow. Everyone is empowered and engaged in a powerful collective vision.

🍃 Everyone in the organisation is encouraged and supported to develop their leadership capabilities regardless of position, and their capacity to improve the organisation and the world around it is recognised, valued and nurtured.

NATURAL SYSTEMS:

🍃 Systems-thinking is used in order to understand all the different elements of the organisation in relation to the whole and to view the organisation holistically.

🍃 Problems and challenges are looked at in the context of relationships, and new practices or processes are considered in terms of their impact on the health of the organisation as a whole, rather than the individual parts.

🍃 People recognise the adaptive cycles and evolutionary processes which occur in any system and understand the fact that chaos is a natural and necessary part of any successful system.

🍃 The organisation ensures that systems and processes work effectively by engaging people and capturing their hearts and minds rather than through command and control mechanisms.

NATURAL PEOPLE:

🍃 People are free to be their true selves and express their thoughts, emotions, views and ideas without fear or risk of consequences.

🍃 People's differences in experience, background, values, knowledge, views and perspectives are respected, diversity is valued, and different skills and strengths are utilised.

🍃 People are physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually fulfilled in their work and are happy and healthy.

🍃 People show empathy, compassion, love and trust towards each other, build strong relationships, work collaboratively, and feel a sense of belonging.

NATURAL DEVELOPMENT:

🍃 The organisation actively creates the physical and psychological conditions in which creativity and innovation flourish.

🍃 People are actively involved in decision making and problem-solving and are given support, tools, and encouragement to collaborate, generate fresh thinking, and make changes.

- People are encouraged to experiment and to take risks in a no-blame culture where failures are considered an essential vital part of learning, growing, and developing.
- The organisation constantly adapts and evolves and there is a continual cycle of learning where experimentation, questioning, reflection and adapting take place.

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